

who struggled to raise her three young children while working as a seamstress.

The family survived the German occupation from April 1941 to October 1944.

"Italy bombed us, Germany bombed us, and then the allies bombed us," he said. "Many of my neighbors got killed. How I survived was a miracle!"

Bebis said that during this difficult time, the Greeks longed for emancipation from the Americans and the British.

"I had no money, but I wanted to study English," he said. "I gave an English teacher part of my bread coupons. I denied myself food so I could buy books and learn English."

During a catechism class, the teacher asked if any of the students had considered the priesthood.

"I was the only one who raised a hand," he said. "I wanted to become a priest like my grandfather."

At the end of the class, the teacher asked him, "Do you want to go to America?"

"Of course," he answered.

A short time later an American bishop visited Greece, and Bebis was chosen as a seminarian. He arrived in the United States in 1947.

He received a full scholarship to study theology for the priesthood of the Greek Orthodox Church.

"This country has been wonderful to me," he said.

Bebis earned a master's degree in theology and was ordained on March 25, 1951.

The same year he wed Irene Vouris of Wauwatertown.

"I married a wonderful woman," he said. "Irene was a beautiful lady, the redeeming feature in my life, and she gave me four marvelous, successful children: Stephen, George, Paul and Constance."

"I am also grateful for my 11 grandchildren and four great-children"

Bebis became the pastor of St. George Greek Orthodox Church in New Bedford on Oct. 1, 1953.

"When I came to New Bedford, some prominent people told me that this was a difficult parish in a difficult town, and they gave me six months," he said laughing. "I found the people extremely fine, and in every person I saw the image of Christ."

Bebis has always been involved in ecumenical activities, serving as a member of the Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford since 1954.

"I was very happy to associate myself with both my friends from the Inter-Church Council and the many Catholic priests," he said.

In May 1976, the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople awarded him the title of protopresbyter, the highest rank of a married priest in the Greek Orthodox Church.

Bebis reached out to the community as pastor; as founder of the antipoverty agency, the Agnes Braz and Hope Bean North End Community Center; and as president of On-board Legal Services for the Poor, among a host of other charitable work.

In May 2003, Metropolitan Methodios of Boston conferred upon Bebis the ancient office of archimandrite, the title given to priests who are eligible to become bishops.

Bebis was honored by the City of New Bedford in 2004 for his more than 50 years of service to the community. His portrait by artist Deborah Macy is on display at the New Bedford Free Public Library.

A bench in front of the Math and Science building at Bristol Community College also pays tribute to the Greek immigrant who became the beloved father to his congregation, as well as friend and benefactor to the community at large.

Marking his amazing journey are these words carved in stone: "He has illumined our minds, clarified our vision, deepened our

souls, enlarged our hearts, broadened our compassion, enriched our spirit, and our humanity."

Bebis said that his mission was crowned when the congregation moved into their new church building on Cross Road in Dartmouth two years ago.

"It was an emotional thing for some of the parishioners to leave the old church," he said. "But the church is flourishing in our new facilities. I am amazed at the attendance."

A resident of New Bedford, Bebis said that he will remain a faithful and supportive member of the parish.

"I decided to retire, but a priest never retires," he said. "I will still be here as a member of the parish. As long as I live, I will serve the church."

## CELEBRATING THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE YMCA OF DANE COUNTY

### HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2011

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the 125th anniversary of the YMCA of Dane County and to honor all those who make this institution such an influential part of our community.

As a component of the greater YMCA system, the Dane County Y exemplifies the values of the national organization. The YMCA of Dane County is committed to youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. These three areas of focus fuel the numerous programs and services the Y delivers to our community. In 2010, the YMCA of Dane County graciously spent more than \$572,000 in programs that benefit the public.

The YMCA is a place where more than 19,800 youth members cultivate skills and gain the self-confidence necessary to become successful and positive members of society. Programs like Fill the Gap help youth grow by targeting at-risk teens and engaging them in challenging and fun activities in safe environments. Furthermore, thirty licensed before and after school sites throughout the county care for 1,200 children each day. These sites provide the necessary environment to keep children learning, engaged, and safe.

Additionally, the Y's Healthy Living initiative is fighting the country's obesity epidemic by encouraging a more active lifestyle. Each year, the YMCA reaches over 60,000 people through their wellness programs and provides a safe and clean environment for exercise. Furthermore, various exercise classes and access to pools and gymnasiums help encourage our community to stay fit and healthy.

The YMCA of Dane County also works towards producing hard-working members of society with its social responsibility programs. The YMCA's mission strives to ensure that every person has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive, regardless of socio-economic status. One of the many ways the Dane County Y fulfills this mission is by providing support, educational, and training services to unemployed citizens, which are desperately needed in the tough economic times we face today. This clear and determined dedication to improving the lives of community members not only physically, but also emotionally, highlights the importance of the YMCA of Dane County.

The Lussier Family East, Northeast, and Lussier Family West branches of the YMCA of Dane County work in conjunction to better our community and provide valuable resources and support. Along with the three branches, the four youth centers and numerous child care locations create a strong network dedicated to improving the lives of the members of our community.

I admire the mission and efforts of the YMCA of Dane County and look forward to many more years of service to our community. I proudly join those across Dane County, the entire state of Wisconsin, and our great nation in celebrating the 125th anniversary of the YMCA of Dane County and in thanking the members, employees, volunteers, and donors for their exemplary service to our community.

## A TRIBUTE TO IZORA NEAL

### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2011

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Detective First Grade Izora Neal for her dedication to restoring law and order in my district, as well as for bridging the gap between the community and the police.

Detective First Grade Neal is currently assigned as the Community Affairs Officer of Police Service Area #2. She entered the New York City Police Department Academy in 1994. Upon her graduation, she was assigned to the PSA #2. Detective Neal excelled—engaging in numerous arrests while gaining experience on the force. Detective Neal was assigned to the Community Affairs position in October 1997. She entered the position with confidence and a genuine desire to have a positive impact for all New York City Housing Authority residents.

Detective Neal was ambitious about the prospects of becoming detective and made great strides towards accomplishing her goal. In July 1999, her perseverance was recognized as she was promoted to the rank of Detective Special Assignment. As a newly promoted Detective she continued in her present assignment and utilized her leadership and strong interpersonal skills, gaining the trust of all residents. In her continued pursuit for success, Detective Neal was promoted to the rank of Detective Second Grade in February 2003. Although pleased with her present rank and assignment, Detective Neal's desire for excellence compelled her to continue working hard. Her devotion for a better quality of life for all NYCHA residents proved to be very successful. In August 2006 she was promoted to the rank of Detective First Grade.

Currently, Detective Neal continues to make strides while assigned to Police Service Area #2, giving her the opportunity to display her leadership skills, and her dedication towards the community. As the Community Affairs Officer one must ensure a bond of trust and reliance between the police and community; one must be open-minded, unbiased and sensitive to the concerns and problems within the community, display empathy and compassion with sincerity, but not in a rehearsed manner. These ideas are a part of the partnership that allows Detective Neal to define herself as the Community Affairs Officer of Police Service Area #2.